

Newark Community Sustainability Plan

Plan for Planning



Project Description

The City of Newark received grant funding from DNREC’s Division of Energy and Climate to develop, through a collaborative process, a broad, long-term, and integrated community sustainability plan – *Sustainable Newark* – to implement the City’s vision, goals, and action items contained in its recently adopted Comprehensive Development Plan V (Plan V).

A community sustainability plan is a roadmap for making a community a socially fair, economically strong, and environmentally healthy place to live, work, and play. Developed in consultation with community members, a community sustainability plan is a long-term plan to help the community realize its collective sustainability goals. Sustainability plans also employ indicators to track progress towards these goals, and includes action plans that have roles of government, citizens, businesses, and civic organizations. (1)

Funds will be used to hire an outside consultant to help facilitate the process and provide much needed technical assistance and research. The *Sustainable Newark Plan* will balance the community’s environmental, economic, social, and cultural interests with the following sustainability principles:

- Public engagement and education: Offering opportunities for input and education to all citizens, businesses, interest groups, relevant units of government, and other parties to participate in a meaningful way throughout the entire planning process.
- Plan integration: Linking sustainability to land use, transportation, housing, economic development, water supply, and other planning goals and objectives.
- Aligning internal operations: Ensuring that City policies, regulations, purchasing practices, and internal programs are compatible with sustainability goals.

Components of *Sustainable Newark* will include 1) a community vision statement reflecting the shared-values of the community, 2) a review and evaluation of Plan V’s sustainability goals and action items to determine priorities, 3) a review of the Newark Municipal Code to evaluate any impediments to the plan’s sustainability goals, 4) setting specific benchmarks, targets, and timelines to achieve sustainability objectives, and 5) an implementation plan to designate responsibilities, track progress, and evaluate outcomes.

Community-focused sustainability categories will include, but not be limited to, the following:

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|------------------------|------------------------|
| • Energy reduction | • Local food systems |
| • Renewable energy use | • Green infrastructure |
| • Water reduction | • Green buildings |
| • Water conservation | • Green urban design |
| • Clean transportation | • Flood resiliency |

The outcome of *Sustainable Newark* will provide a blueprint for the City of Newark to realize and implement the vision, goals, and action items of its Comprehensive Development Plan V.

Newark's Comprehensive Development Plan V

Newark's vision of being as "Sustainable Community", as stated in Plan V, is to have "a community that is sustainable, both economically and environmentally, for generations to come" and included the following aspirations:

- Promoting transit and other alternative transportation modes for reduced dependence on fossil fuels
- Stream valley/watershed protection
- Energy conservation and recycling
- High air and water quality
- Diverse economic base and welcoming business climate
- Preserving historical resources
- Maintaining and improving basic infrastructure
- Efficient use of public resources.

The vision of sustainability runs through each chapter element, including Public Utilities and Infrastructure (Chapter 4), Housing (Chapter 5), Transportation (Chapter 6), Environmental Quality and Natural Resources (Chapter 7), Parks and Recreation (Chapter 8), Economic Development (Chapter 9) and Land Use (Chapter 10).

Project Team

The project will establish a "Steering Committee" to bring together a diverse range of government agencies, City Departments, community groups, and residents to coordinate a comprehensive and integrated sustainability plan. The project team will include:

Representative from the *Conservation Advisory Commission*

Representative from the *Newark Planning Commission*

Representative from *WILMAPCO*

Representative from *University of Delaware*

Representative from *BikeNewark*

Representative from the *Newark Transportation Improvement Project (Newark TriP)*

Department of Public Works and Water Resources

Department of Parks and Recreation

Department of Planning and Development

Newark City Manager's Office

2-3 Newark Residents (At-Large)

Community Outreach & Public Participation

The community outreach of the Newark Community Sustainability Plan is to offer opportunities and encouragement to all citizens, businesses, interest groups, relevant units of government, and other parties to participate in a meaningful way throughout the entire process, with the primary purpose of addressing the ultimate questions: “What is vision residents of Newark have for their sustainable community?”

The public participation process will:

1. Ensure all planning decisions are open to public comment;
2. Produce better planning decisions;
3. Support and add credibility to all City decision-making processes;
4. Provide opportunities to disseminate information about the *Sustainable Newark Plan* to the community;
5. Strengthen the relationship between our decision makers and citizens; and,
6. Develop a shared vision for the future of the City of Newark.

A “stakeholder” is considered to be any individual, group, organization, or agency that has a vested interest - present or future - in the outcomes of the planning process. The Planning and Development Department will identify and engage representatives from a diverse range of stakeholders as possible. Key stakeholders include:

1. Community residents from a diverse range of backgrounds and from all regions of the City.
2. Residents who have not historically been engaged in the decision-making process, such as low-income residents, minority groups, and young people.
3. Business, industry and civic leaders.
4. The development community, including real-estate professionals.
5. City staff and elected officials.
6. University of Delaware leadership.
7. Banks, churches, civic clubs, students, service organization.

Provisions for Open Discussion

To ensure that public meetings allow for an open discussion of the relevant issues, the City of Newark’s Planning and Development Department will make every effort to ensure those who choose to participate have the opportunity to have their opinions heard. To accomplish this, the following actions will be implemented:

- An agenda will be established for each public hearing or meeting outlining the purpose, items to be discussed, and any actions that may be taken.

- The scheduled date, time, and place will be convenient to encourage maximum participation by city residents and other stakeholders.
- A clearly identifiable facilitator or chair will conduct the meeting or hearing in an orderly fashion to ensure that all attendees have an opportunity to offer comments, discuss issues, or provide testimony.
- The facilitator or chair will provide opening remarks that clearly outline the purpose of the meeting or hearing, describe procedures attendees should use during the meeting or hearing when offering input, and describe how the public input will be used.
- All persons attending the meeting or hearing that desire to participate should be allowed to do so. However, specific factors, such as the meeting or hearing purpose, number in attendance, time considerations, and future opportunities to participate may require that appropriate constraints be applied, to be outlined by the facilitator or chair if the need arises.
- All attendees will be encouraged to sign in using a provided sign-in sheet.
- Special arrangements will be made under the provisions of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) with sufficient advance notice.

In order to achieve its goal of providing opportunities and encouragement to Newark residents and stakeholders to participate in the sustainable community planning process, the *Sustainable Newark* project team will use a variety of approaches to inform the public and invite participation.

- **Develop a Link on the City of Newark Website**

The Planning and Development Department will post information regarding the sustainable community planning progress and dates of upcoming public participation sessions. This information may include agendas, minutes, draft plan elements and reports, maps, photographs, and survey results, as well as provide an opportunity for the public to provide input.

- **Community Day “Open House” Planning Workshop**

Community Day is a City-sponsored annual event held each year on “The Green” of the University of Delaware Campus. This year the event will be on Sunday, September 17, 2017, from 11 AM – 4 PM, and will serve as the “Kick Off” for *Sustainable Newark* planning effort. The Sustainable Newark project team will host an exhibit at the event to expose citizens to information and ideas that support sustainable planning, as well as provide citizens with the opportunity to ask questions, express concerns, and react to information (text, graphs, photos) and provide both written and oral input. The exhibit will also be a part of a “Sustainable Community Cluster” with representatives from other local and regional

planning agencies and groups such as the Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO), and BikeNewark, and Newark TriP.

- **Civic and Community Presentations**

Throughout the planning process, representatives from the *Sustainable Newark* project team will meet with local civic and community organizations to discuss the development of the *Sustainable Newark Plan*, as well as collecting public feedback.

- **Community Displays**

The development of public displays will be prepared during the course of the project and could be displayed at locations such as City Hall and/or the Newark Free Library.

- **News Releases and Mass Media**

Throughout the planning process, the *Sustainable Newark* project team will make efforts to keep the public informed through media outlets such as the *News Journal*, the *Newark Post*, and local radio and television broadcasts, as well as City administered media such as the City website and *Channel 22*.

- **Public Workshops and Meetings**

The *Sustainable Newark* project team will hold a series of public workshops and meetings to assimilate information relevant to the development of the *Newark Sustainable Plan*. Through public comment, residents and other stakeholders will be able to participate and become instrumental in the planning process.

Below are the results of a “Dot” survey conducted during Newark’s Community Day

